

Dear Certificated Teachers and Staff,

I hope this message finds you well.

Please see below for a statement I have written in regards to recent events.
This message was sent to our Senior Leadership Team yesterday.

If you have any questions and concerns, please feel free to contact me.

June 1, 2020

SPS Team:

As we prepare to begin summer learning this week, we know that many are struggling during the ongoing, painful aftermath of the tragic deaths of **George Floyd**, **Ahmaud Arbery** and **Breonna Taylor**. Our students, staff and families are burdened by the racism that exists in our nation, region and community. Many of us may be experiencing a variety of complex emotions, including anxiety, fear, anger, sadness and despair. I know, as a woman of color and a mother to a biracial son, that I am personally dealing with all these emotions as I process the recent weeks.

In our role as SPS educators, it is our responsibility to be **equity champions for all students** and to create learning environments that are inclusive and affirming of all identities and lived experiences. The **following resources** are designed to help us better understand the challenges we face in order to better serve and support our students and colleagues. I encourage you to read, reflect and engage.

- [Resource 1](#)
 - This is an article written by a woman who details her journey with understanding her Whiteness and race relations through critical and transformative readings that helped her.
- [Resource 2](#)
 - This article provides detailed steps on how to become an ally for racial justice along with other recommended readings and resources.
- [Resource 3](#)
 - This article details a list of anti-racist readings.

In addition, the following article addresses **racism and Covid-19** as current, disproportionate public health issues.

- [Article](#)

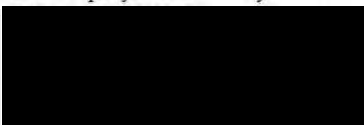
It is important that we acknowledge that the realities of Minneapolis and other cities are not isolated from the experiences of our students, our families and staff members here in Springfield. These resources will not only prepare you for important self-reflection, but also **prepare you for the critical conversations** that you may face with our students, staff, families and community members. The learning should not stop with these resources, but continue to expand. This is why our Board of Education adopted the expansion of the district's Strategic Plan by adding **Focus Area 5 on Equity and Diversity**. This is also why training and professional learning will continue throughout the district.

The equity and diversity team is here to support you through these challenging times as you guide and support our students. To be successful in this collaborative work, we remain focused on **partnering with each of you** to ensure the progress we make together is both strategic and systematic, for the benefit of all. Working together, we can build a space where students are comfortable engaging without fear or discomfort.

I encourage you to reach out to us by phone or email anytime.

Sincerely,

Yvania Garcia-Pusateri, Ph.D.
Pronouns in Use: She, Her, Hers
Chief Equity and Diversity Officer



Every item on this page was chosen by an ELLE editor. We may earn commission on some of the items you choose to buy.

The Anti-Racist Reading List

Because allyship can't be proven with a few social media posts.

BY [BREA BAKER](#) MAY 27, 2020





The last few weeks, and really, the last few centuries, have been exhausting for Black Americans. The violent cycle goes: trauma —> invisibilization —> normalization —> repeat. How do we stop the runaway train that is white supremacy? There's no one answer—a complex problem needs many solutions. But the question I consistently pose to those who claim to support Black people is, "When is the last time you read a book written by a Black person of your own volition?"

The answer I often receive is silence and an averted gaze. But these books contain so many of the answers. Black people have been yelling and writing about the many paths to true equity since before this country was formally founded. Spoiler alert: the 28 days in Black History Month are not enough time to acknowledge this scholarship. Our contributions to this great nation cannot be confined to one short month, and your allyship cannot be proven with a few social media posts. The best way to show your commitment to the Black community today and every day is by genuinely engaging with us. That starts with the books.

As James Baldwin said, "It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive." There's no better time for stillness, independent learning, and empathy for those disproportionately impacted by systemic issues than right now. Below is a list of recommended reads from some of the greatest Black American authors, thinkers, and leaders. Hopefully you'll find an answer to my first question. You'll certainly find that many of your questions about the Black experience are already answered around you.

1

"Recitatif" by Toni Morrison

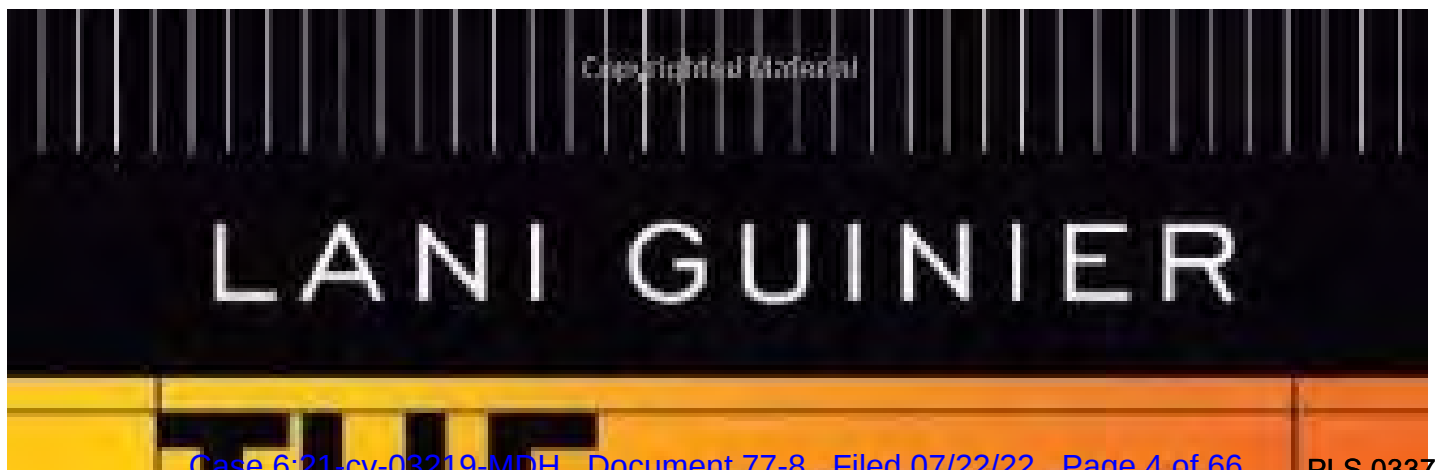


R TTY M

This short story powerfully demonstrates the internalization of racism, and how it manifests itself in ways like microaggressions.

2

The Miner's Canary by Lani Guiner and Gerald Torres



THE MINER'S CANARY

ENLISTING RACE,
RESISTING POWER,
TRANSFORMING
DEMOCRACY

GERALD TORRES

Copyrighted Material

amazon.com

\$22.99

SHOP NOW

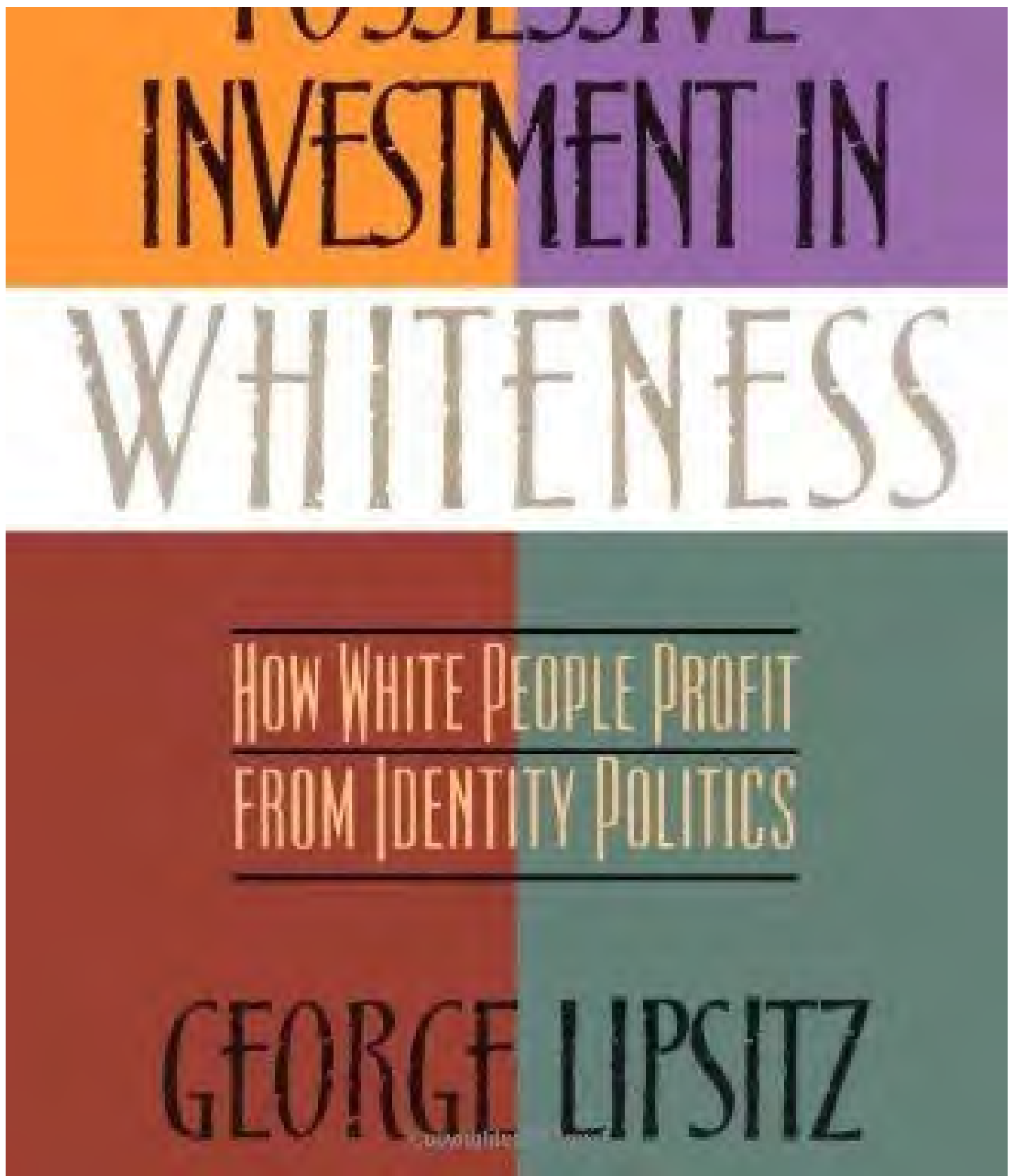
This is an outstanding explanation as to why racism is not a Black problem or a Latinx problem or an Arab problem. Racism is *everyone's* problem, because as Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." This text highlights how minority communities have mobilized for and with one another, something present in recent social justice movements and what we will need to expand in this crucial election year.

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3

Possessive Investment In Whiteness by George Lipsitz





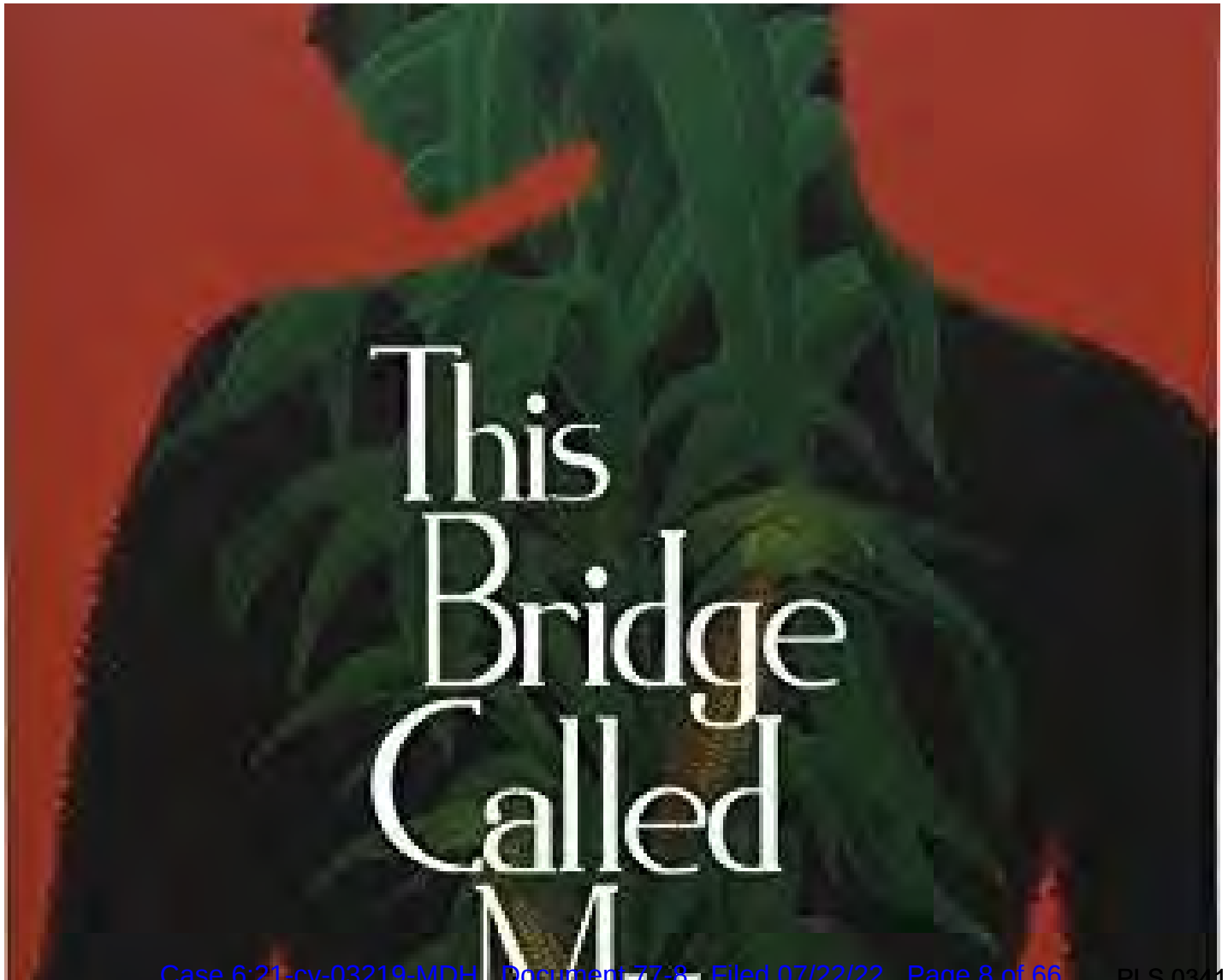
Brand Temple University Press
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)
\$150.00

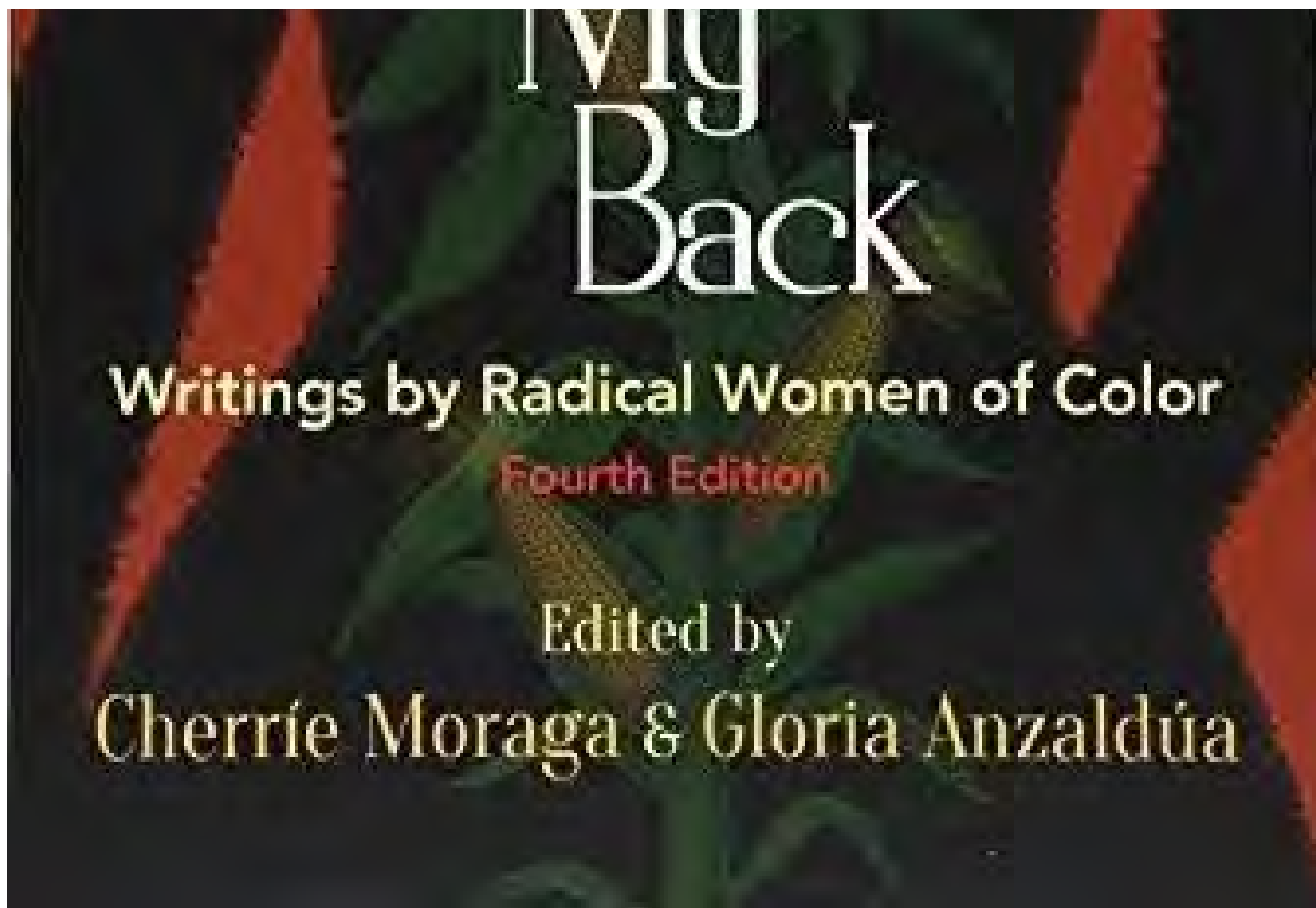
SHOP NOW

What is white privilege? The term is difficult to explain to individuals, specifically white people who do not feel privileged economically or otherwise. But white privilege is very real, and understanding it is fundamental to being an ally. This text provides an extensive look at white privilege in social, political, and economic arenas.

4

This Bridge Called My Back Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa





State University of New York Press
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

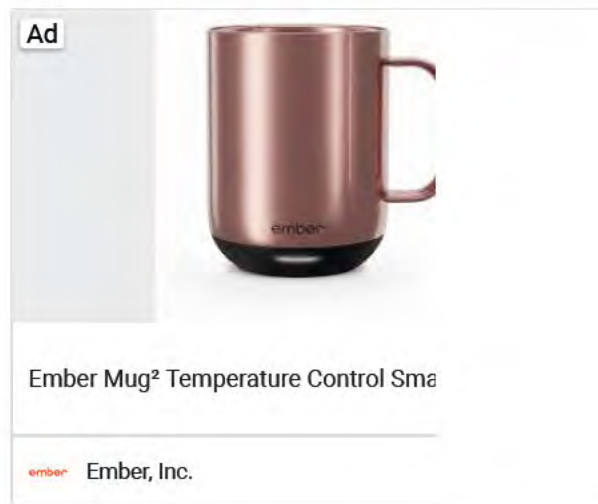
\$34.95

\$29.40 (16% off)

SHOP NOW

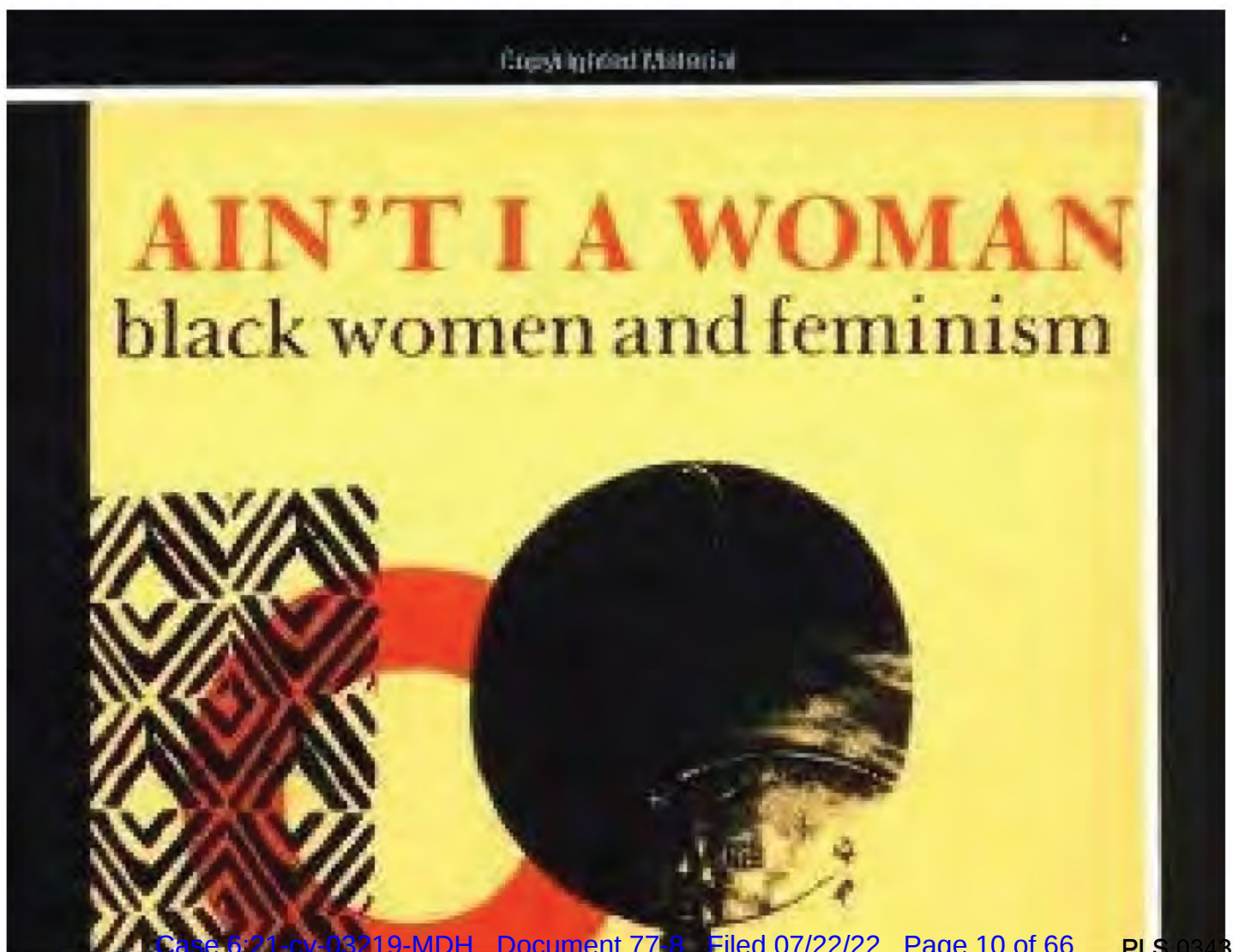
This anthology of short stories and essays centers around the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, class, and race. It's a must-read for anyone attempting to understand the plight of women of color who are often left behind in discussions of both racism and sexism.

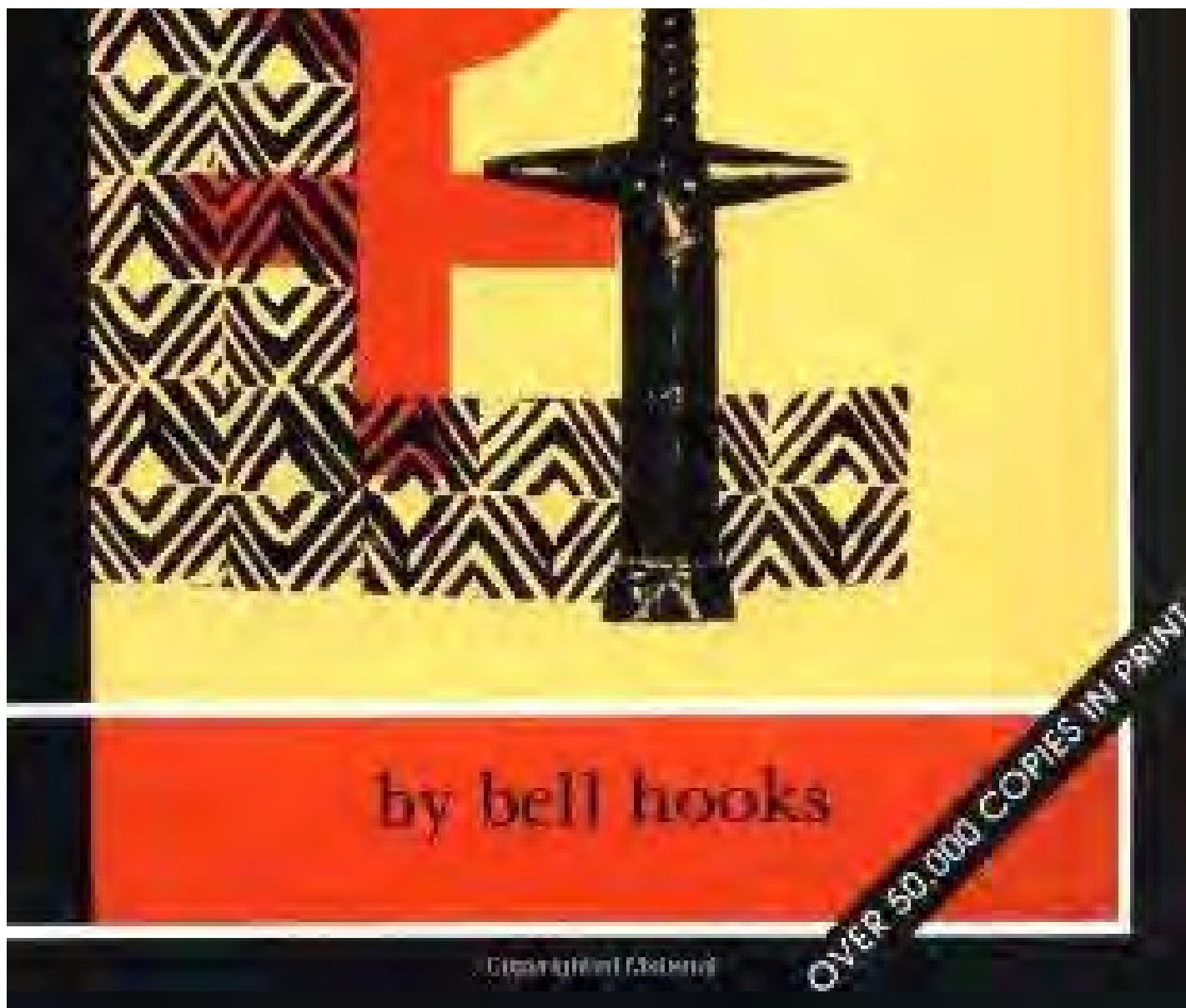
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5

Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism by bell hooks





South End Press
amazon.com

\$74.95

SHOP NOW

An analysis of how the the convergence of racism and sexism leads to the treatment of Black women as the lowest members of society. This text also speaks to how feminism often ignores and purposely leaves behind Black women.

6

*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the
Rainbow Is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange

Scribner
amazon.com

~~\$12.99~~

\$7.99 (38% off)

SHOP NOW

This series of poetic monologues reads like a play and tells the story of seven Black women and their experiences with society. With racism. With sexism. With Black men who took out their frustrations with oppression on them. Black women are always made out to be so strong that their emotional breakdowns have no outlet.

This text is that outlet.

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Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur

Lawrence Hill Books
amazon.com

~~\$18.95~~

\$16.95 (11% off)

SHOP NOW

This autobiography was truly life-changing for me. Assata Shakur is an icon of the fight for Black liberation in the 1960s and '70s, and in her powerfully personal autobiography, Shakur details what brought her to the Civil Rights Movement and what she faced as a black woman in a white man's world.

8

A Taste of Power by Elaine Brown

amazon.com

\$14.99

SHOP NOW

Historically, social justice movements are seen from the perspective of the prominent, charismatic men in leadership. Most people know Martin Luther

King, John Lewis, and Huey Newton, but not Ella Baker, Diane Nash, or Elaine Brown—the first and only female leader of the Black Panther Party. Read her story and rectify that.

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9

Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde

amazon.com

\$9.99

SHOP NOW

Race, class, gender, sexual orientation—Audre Lorde covers them all from her own personal experiences, showing how systems of oppression overlap to create new, marginalized experiences. *Sister Outsider* pushes all the envelopes by looking at identity through the lens of police violence, gender based violence, colonization, and much more.

10

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

amazon.com

\$11.99

SHOP NOW

If you're trying to understand how "beauty" is racialized and how Black people are conditioned to aspire to whiteness, this is the novel for you. Through poetic storytelling, Morrison shows how far we go in our desire to cover up trauma and how powerful (and sacred) self-love can be for Black women.

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Divided Sisters by Midge Wilson & Kathy Russell

Anchor
amazon.com

SHOP NOW

This one is for the white women working to be allies who don't fully understand their contentious and sometimes distrustful relationships with Black women. Black women carry so much pain passed down from former generations and derived from our own lives. In order to bridge these gaps, you must first know and understand Black women's experiences.

12

Black Feminist Thought by Patricia Hill Collins

amazon.com

\$135.37

SHOP NOW

There's a lot of talk about white feminism and the ways it falls short of representing all women. Patricia Collins presents the theories and ideologies Black women have developed as alternatives to serve the breadth of our communities.

13

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston

amazon.com

\$6.99

SHOP NOW

How can you hold an appreciation for Blackness and our culture without engaging with our greats? Our writers are not electives and it should be everyone's mission to become acquainted with Black icons. Zora Neale Hurston is one of the greatest Black writers across time, and for that reason alone, this book is necessary reading.

14

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin

amazon.com

\$11.99

SHOP NOW

James Baldwin is known for his storytelling, but it's so important for people to get into his nonfiction essays. Addressing race, religion, and how they've intersected in American history, *The Fire Next Time* was one of the most influential texts on race from the 1960s—and remains so.

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15

Passing by Nella Larsen

amazon.com

\$1.99

SHOP NOW

Colorism is the system by which light-skinned Black people have the privilege to transcend their race—and often, class—due to their phenotype (that is, how they present to the world). This novel takes us through the ways identity is both fluid and strategic, depending on your proximity.

16

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

amazon.com

\$9.99

SHOP NOW

This is required reading for anyone looking to understand how our criminal justice system is racialized and weaponized against people of color and especially Black people. (A great companion to this book is Ava DuVernay's documentary *13th* on Netflix.)

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17

Whiteness of a Different Color by Matthew Frye Jacobson

amazon.com

\$17.88

SHOP NOW

Most of us know that race is a social construct, which means the concept of race was created out of a convenience for explaining hierarchy. This read—while a thick one—goes deep into how white people were re-racialized from their European roots into white Americans in order to create one large ruling racial category. Knowing this history can help us avoid being complicit in systems of oppression.

18

The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon

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A NEW TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH BY

RICHARD PHILCOX

WITH A FOREWORD BY

HOMI K. BHABHA

AND A PREFACE BY

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH





amazon.com

\$9.07

SHOP NOW

The reason we haven't eradicated racism is because most people underestimate it. Racism and colonization are deeply entrenched in every part of our society and even our psyche. Fanon makes the case in a way that feels dense but is so comprehensive and accurate, painting the blueprint for what it will take from all of us to finally build a society *made* for all of us.

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19

But Some of Us Are Brave Edited by Akasha (Gloria T.) Hull,
Patricia Bell-Scott, & Barbara Smith

All the Women Are White,
All the Blacks Are Men,
**But Some of Us
Are Brave**
Black Women's Studies



Edited by Akasha (Gloria T.) Hull,
Patricia Bell Scott & Barbara Smith

amazon.com

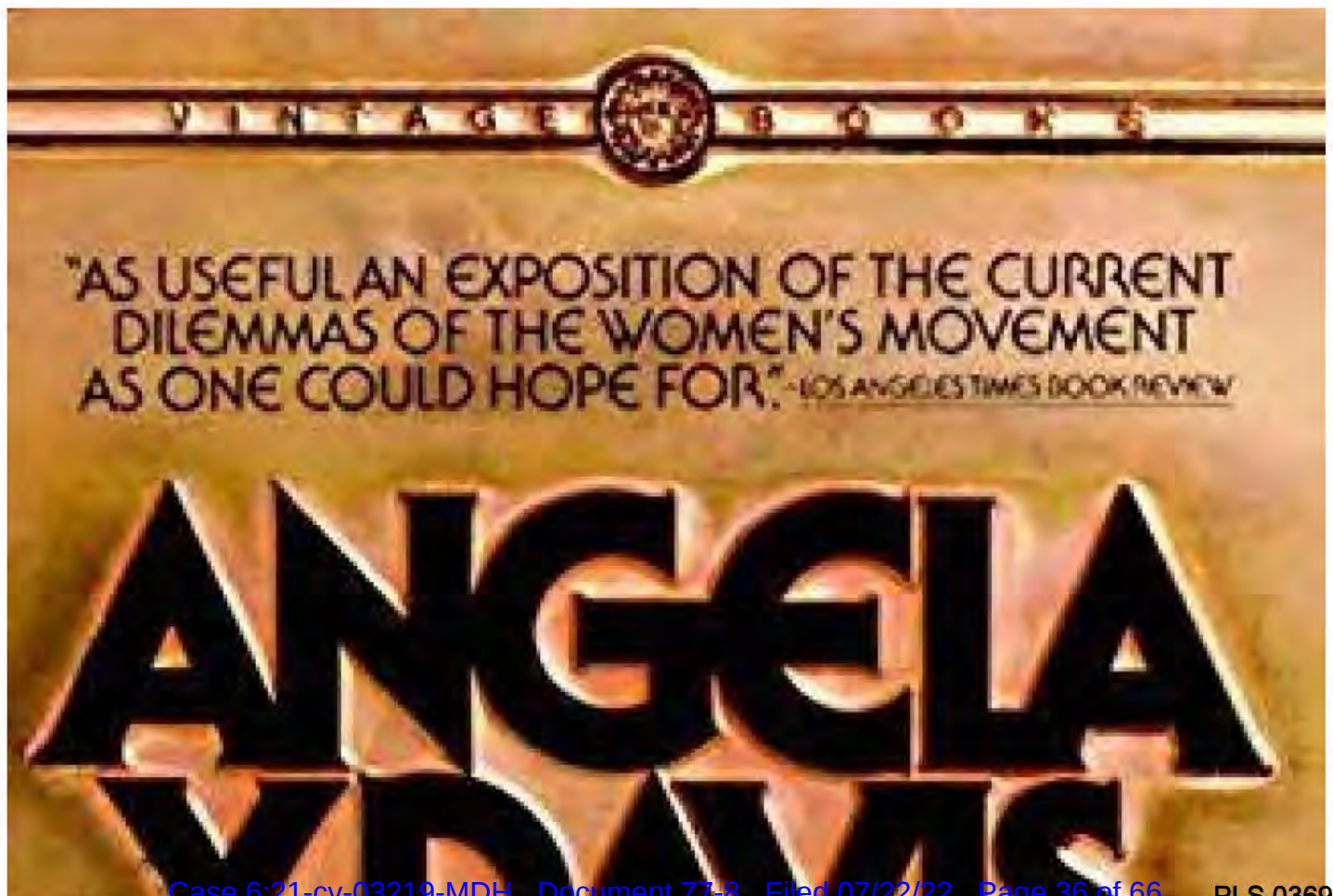
\$8.79

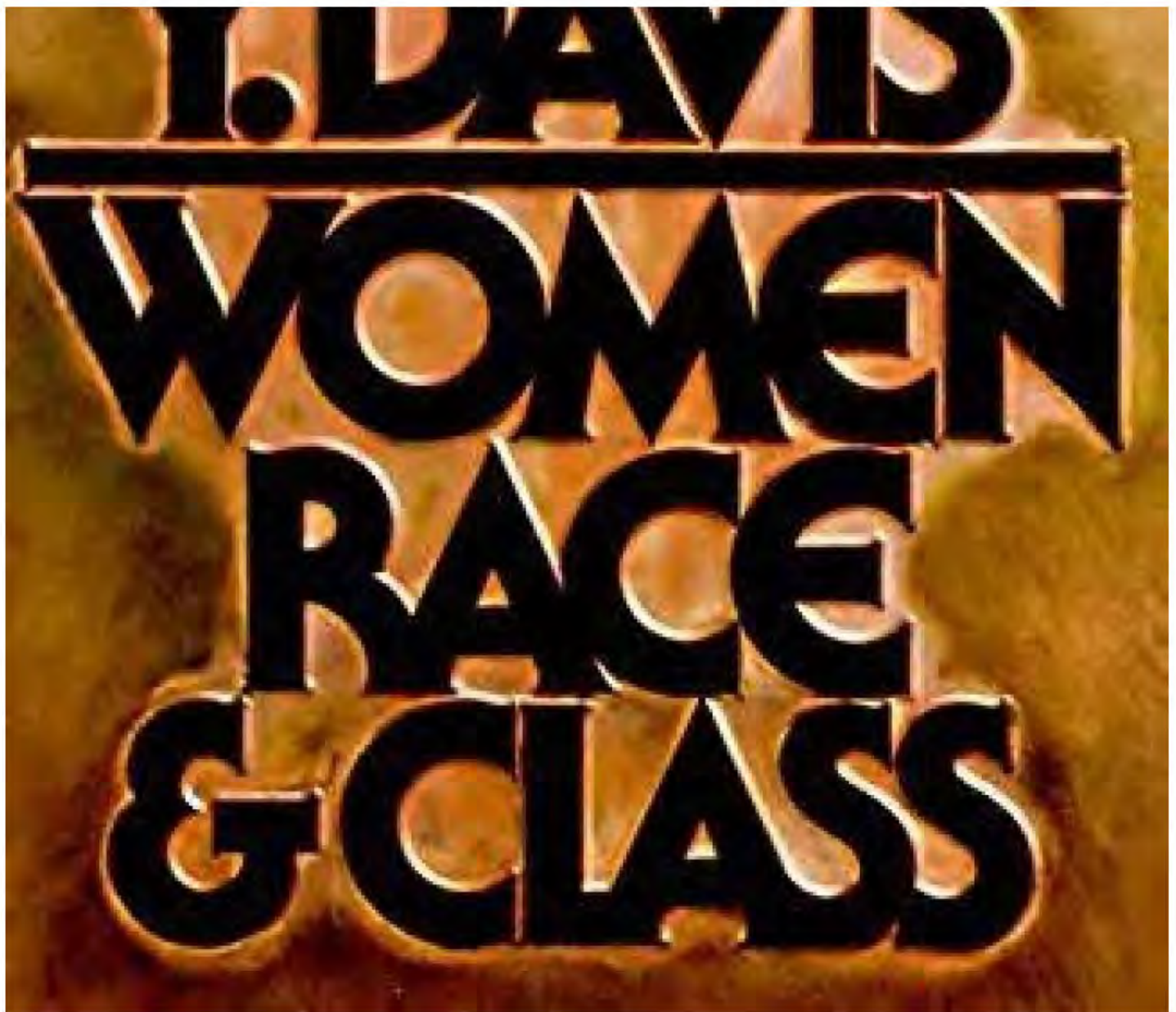
SHOP NOW

Intersectional became quite the buzzword following the 2016 Women's March, but it's important to acknowledge that intersectionality doesn't equal diversity. This anthology drives that message home while sharing the experiences of those at the margins.

20

Women, Race, & Class by Angela Y. Davis





amazon.com

\$13.99

SHOP NOW

Angela Davis provides the gender, racial, and class analysis the world truly needs—in only the way Ms. Davis can. This is a great follow-up for those looking to dive deeper into intersectionality and how various issues are compounded for low income women of color.

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BREA BAKER

Brea Baker is racial and gender justice activist working locally and nationally towards the liberation of all oppressed people with an emphasis on black people and women.

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MORE FROM

WHAT TO READ IN 2021





10 Books by LGBTQ Authors to Read Now and Always



A Big Long Time

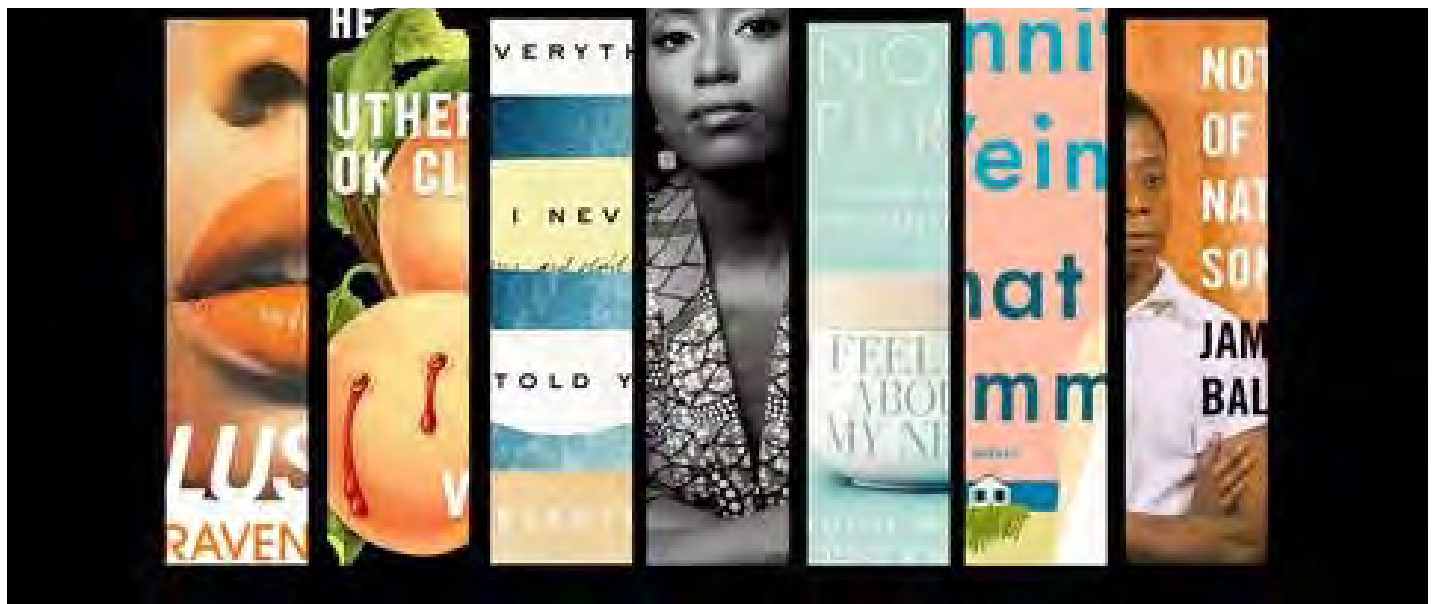
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Shelf Life: Megha Majumdar







Shelf Life: Zakiya Dalila Harris



Losing My Religion—And My Virginity






Maybe Dolly Is the Goal, but Loretta Is the Truth



Shelf Life: Choi Eunyoung

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America's 'Two Deadly Viruses' – Racism And Covid-19 — Go Viral Among Outraged Twitter Users



Lisette Voytko Forbes Staff
Business
Wealth Reporter

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-02:35

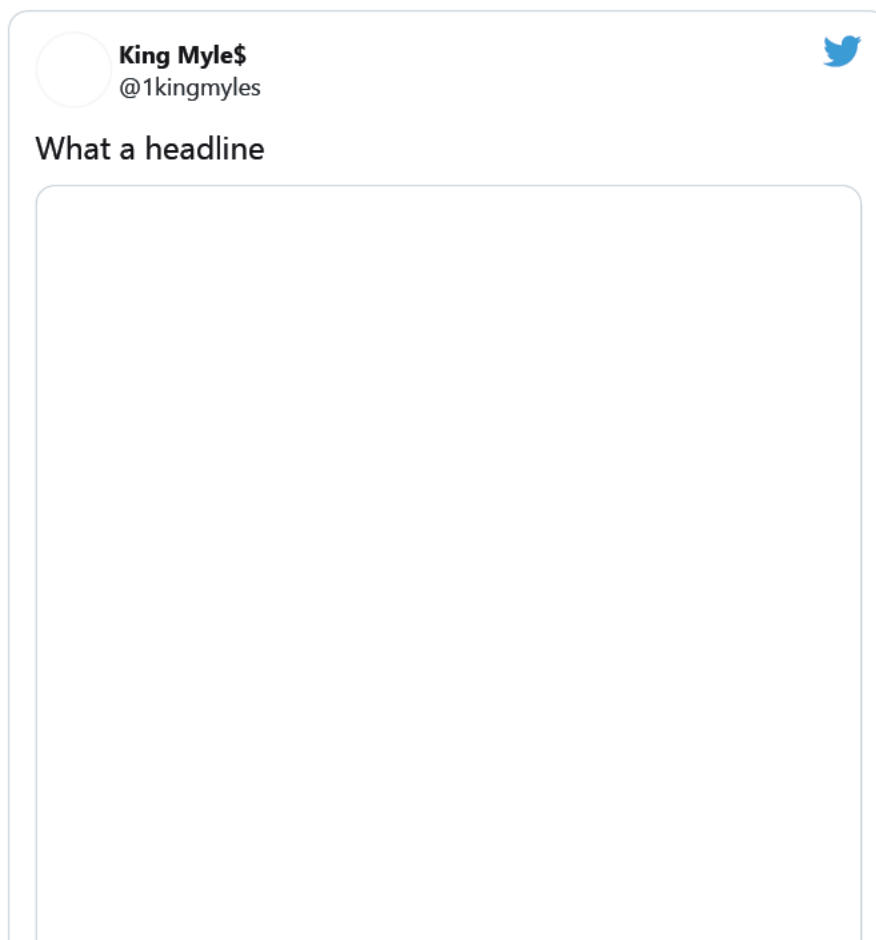
TOPLINE A blurry photo showing a CNN headline (“Two Deadly Viruses Are Killing Americans: Covid-19 And Racism”) and posted to Twitter became the platform’s most-liked tweet this week according to data from social media tracking firm NewsWhip, as turbulent protests triggered by George Floyd’s death brought thousands of Americans to the street, while the coronavirus pandemic is ongoing and unemployment reaches record levels.



Smoke rises around a Minneapolis protester during a Saturday demonstration to call for justice for ... [+] PHOTO BY KRISTIN YUC / AP IMAGES

KEY FACTS


- “What a headline,” [wrote](#) Twitter user @1kingmyle\$ about the CNN chyron, which was displayed during *CNN Tonight*’s May 27 broadcast.
- As of Sunday afternoon, the tweet had generated nearly 3 million likes and had been shared over 870,000 times.
- In the video clip, Lemon discusses the deaths of Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, along with the viral video of Amy Cooper calling the cops on a black man in Central Park, saying that longstanding racism, along with Covid-19, are infecting America.
- Over 1.7 million Americans have been infected with Covid-19, while over 103,000 have died—but Centers for Disease Control data [suggests](#) black people are more likely to be hospitalized with coronavirus, while [Wired](#) reports that economic inequality, lack of access to quality healthcare, food deserts and other structural inequities contribute to black people being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- According to data from the [Washington Post](#) on shootings in the U.S. by race, black people account for less than 13% of the overall population, but are shot and killed at a rate far higher than white people.
- NewsWhip’s Twitter engagement data comes from its database of influential users, which tracks around 350,000 accounts.



10:28 PM · May 27, 2020



♥ 2.7M 💬 4.9K ↗ Share this Tweet

Don Lemon Tonight 
@DonLemonTonight



CNN's @DonLemon: There are two major crises in this country tonight, two deadly viruses killing Americans: Covid-19 and racism.

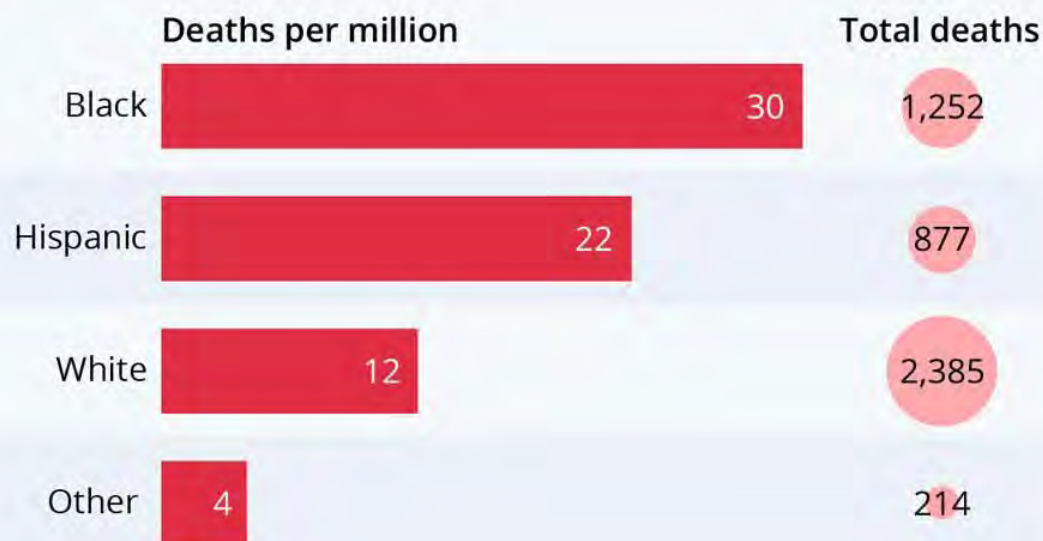
7:02 PM · May 27, 2020



♥ 2.2K ⚡ See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

U.S. Police Shootings: Blacks Disproportionately Affected

Number of people killed in police shootings in the U.S. since January 01, 2015



As of May 28, 2020

Source: The Washington Post



statista

Black people are killed in police shootings at a higher rate per million. GRAPH C BY S A S A, DATA BY THE WASHINGTON POST

CRUCIAL QUOTE

"There are two major crises in this country tonight. Two deadly viruses killing Americans. COVID-19, Racism-20. Now we all know that racism is not new this year, but the latest racially-charged incident is from just last night," said Lemon, referencing the video of a police officer kneeling on Floyd's neck. "Racism is infecting this country, continues to infect this country. Just as surely as COVID-19. And we don't only see it in encounters between African Americans and the police. It even infects a simple walk in the park."

BIG NUMBER

16.7%. That's the black unemployment rate during the pandemic, according to data from the Department of Labor. The Hispanic rate stands at 18.9%, and according to [Guardian](#), unemployment among blacks and Hispanics is typically double the white unemployment rate. Economists cited by the [Washington Post](#) said that the two groups tend to be concentrated in industries impacted by the pandemic, with jobs that can't be done from home.

KEY BACKGROUND

George Floyd's death stoked nationwide outrage during a time in which people have largely been sheltering in place and unable to live their normal lives due to the pandemic. Historic unemployment and a desire among a significant number of Americans to end police killings of black people have seemingly created a powder keg. Protests are entering their [sixth day](#), and in preceding nights have been volatile and marked by buildings set on fire, looting and violent altercations between protesters and police. President Trump has largely [remained silent](#), and done little to call for calm or unity. He has, however, described protesters as "THUGS" and recommended additional law enforcement presence.

FURTHER READING

[As America Burned, President Trump Largely Stayed Silent](#) (Forbes)

[This is how economic pain is distributed in America](#) (Washington Post)

[Covid-19 Is Killing Black People Unequally—Don't Be Surprised](#) (Wired)

[U.S. Police Shootings: Blacks Disproportionately Affected](#) (Statista)

[Wave Of George Floyd Protests Continues Into Sixth Day](#) (Forbes)

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Lisette Voytko

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Lisette Voytko is a wealth reporter at Forbes Magazine, focusing on billionaires, money and the world's richest people. Previously on the Forbes breaking news desk. She... **Read More**

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FOR OUR WHITE FRIENDS DESIRING TO BE ALLIES

BY [COURTNEY ARIEL](#)



AUG 16, 2017

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Author's Note: I'm writing this in hopes that it can be used to lighten the load of marginalized folks, keeping in mind that not all marginalized people want to engage in the ally conversation, and that is perfect as well. For those who do, my prayer is that when someone asks you the question, "how can I be a stronger ally?" you might choose to save your breath/energy and send this in its place.

I have been asked by two dear friends, "how can I be a stronger ally?" Being the slow emotional processor that I am, I wanted to spend some time with this before I answered them. I surely appreciate and love these two individuals, and I appreciate their vulnerability in asking me this question.

READ: [White Supremacy Versus the Gospel in Charlottesville](#)

I am not going to do much coddling here; I don't know that I believe that love requires coddling. Here are six things you can do to be stronger allies.

1. Listen more; talk less. You don't have to have something to say all of the time. You don't have to post something on social media that points to how liberal/how aware/how cool/how good you are. You are lovely, human, and amazing. You have also had the microphone for most of the time, for a very long time, and it will be good to give the microphone to someone else who is living a different experience than your own.

2. For one out of every three opinions/insights shared by a person of color in your life, try to resist the need to respond with a *better* or *different* insight about something that you read or listened to as it relates to their shared opinion. Try just to listen and sit with someone else's experience. When you do share in response to what someone has shared with you, it can sometimes (not always) feel like "whitesplaining" — meaning to explain or comment on something in an over-confident or condescending way. This adds to the silencing of the voices of people of color.

3. Being an ally is different than simply wanting not to be racist (thank you for that, by the way). Being an ally requires you to educate yourself about systemic racism in this country. Read Michelle Alexander's [The New Jim Crow](#) and Ta-Nehisi Coates' [Between the World and Me](#) and Claudia Rankine's [Citizen](#) and so many other great **books** and **articles** that illuminate oppression and structures of white supremacy and white privilege. Use your voice and influence to direct the folks that walk alongside you in real life (or follow you on the internet), toward the voice of someone that is living a marginalized/disenfranchised experience.

4. Please try not to, "I can't believe that something like this would happen in this day and age!" your way into being an ally when atrocities like the events in Charleston, S.C., and Charlottesville, Va., happen. People of color have been aware of this kind of hatred and violence in America for centuries, and it belittles our experience for you to show up 300 years late to the oppression-party suddenly caring about the world. Don't get me wrong, I

BEING AN ALLY REQUIRES YOU TO EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THIS COUNTRY.

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welcome you. I want for you to come into a place of awareness. However, your shock and outrage at the existence of racism in America echoes the fact that you have lived an entire life with the luxury of indifference about the lives of marginalized/disenfranchised folks. Please take several seats.

5. Ask when you don't know — but do the work first. This is nuanced. Some marginalized/disenfranchised folks will tell you not to ask them anything; don't be offended by that. Folks are tired, and that is understandable because it is exhausting to be a marginalized person in this world. However, there is something special that happens within human connections and relationships. In a nutshell, don't expect for people to educate you. Do the work to educate yourself. Ask questions within relationships that feel safe, and do so respectfully.

READ: How Black Lives Matter Changed My Theology

6. And finally, **stop talking about colorblindness**. It's not a thing. Colorblindness is totally impossible in a nation whose land was taken from the indigenous inhabitants through an attempt at genocide and horrific colonization. The same nation that enslaved humans and exploited them in every way imaginable built a nation on their backs, hung them, hunted them, and for centuries kept them from their basic inalienable rights and still does. The same nation that exploits and deports immigrants who were promised refuge within the American Constitution. The same nation that incarcerated Japanese Americans during World War II and continues to promote bigotry, exclusion, and violence against LGBTQ/gender non-identifying folks. This nation that allows swastika-wearing, Confederate-flag-toting, anti-Semitic racists to have a platform for their hate. The same nation that promised religious freedom, yet targets those who do not believe in a white, capitalist Jesus.

I love Jesus. And promise, Jesus was not white (literally brown, and wonderfully Jewish) and would have never been a capitalist.

It will never be possible for us to be colorblind, and we shouldn't ever want to be.

I heard a saying once at an Al-Anon meeting that offered me liberation: "We are only as sick as our secrets (and our shame)." Shame can only live in the darkness; it can live within the systems of denial and defensiveness that we use to cover it up. We have to name these things, acknowledge them, and begin to do the deep work of transformation, restoration — and reparation.

Yup, now I'm talking about reparations.

Privilege means that you owe a debt. You were born with it. You didn't ask for it. And you didn't pay for it either. No one is blaming you for having it. You are lovely, human, and amazing. Being a citizen of a society requires work from everyone within that society. It is up to you whether you choose to acknowledge the work that is yours to do. It is up to you whether you choose to pay this debt and how you choose to do so.

READ: How to Erase a Person

Sometimes living with privilege can disillusion us into thinking that being in community with other humans doesn't require work. This is a lie; it requires a great deal of work. And all of that work requires being a human and trying to love other humans well.

I believe that this is holy work, the work of justice, the pursuit of it. It doesn't need an audience, and it will not always have one. It will happen most days in ways that are unseen. It might mean providing a meal or shelter, listening, using your particular area of expertise to help someone in need of that expertise who might not have access to it otherwise, bailing a protester out of jail, or paying a family's rent one month (if you have the resources to do so),

E-Mail

Sign Up

**ASK WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW
— BUT DO THE WORK FIRST.**

[TWEET THIS](#)

**YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE
MISTAKES — EXPECT THIS.
BUT KEEP SHOWING UP.**

[TWEET THIS](#)

or marching at a rally with marginalized folks alongside other allies. There may not always be a practical, tangible way to pursue this work, but I believe you will know it when you meet it face-to-face.

However it looks, it will be something that you do without needing to be thanked or receive praise — you are not a savior. Marginalized/disenfranchised folks can and will survive without you — we are magic. However, I urge you to pursue this work, knowing that a system of white privilege afforded you access to opportunities while denying them to so many others.

Above all, I urge you keep trying. You’re going to make mistakes; expect this. But keep showing up. Be compassionate. Lead with empathy, always. Keep learning and growing. If you do this, I truly believe you’ll be doing the work of an ally.

Please keep in mind that self care is hugely important. Take care of yourself and protect your energy before you attempt to care for anyone else.

Some additional resources:

- Article: “**White Debt**” by Eula Biss. *New York Times*, 2015.
- Podcast: On Being with Krista Tippett: Eula Biss, “**Let’s Talk About Whiteness**”. 2017.



Courtney Ariel

Courtney Ariel is a songwriter and storyteller whose music appears on most streaming platforms. She is committed to speaking back — speaking truth — to systems of oppression, which she believes to be at the core of her resistance and pathway to liberation.

Got something to say about what you're reading? We value your feedback!

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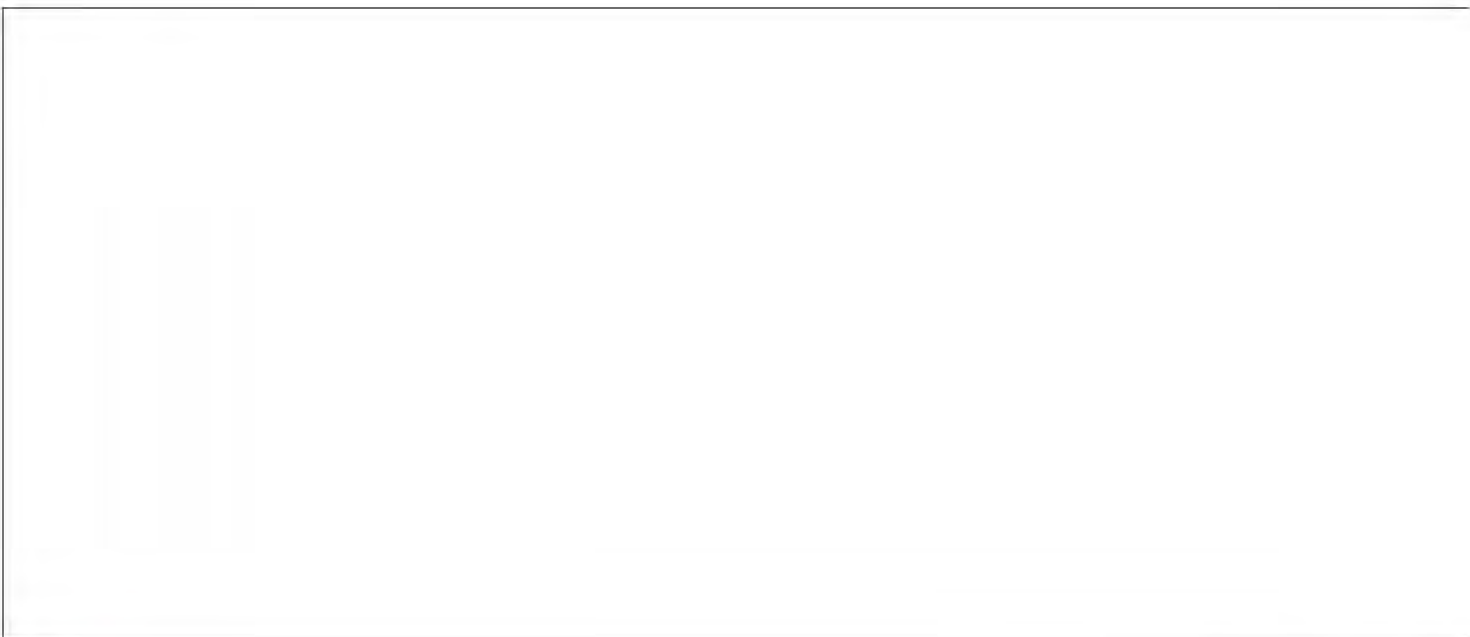
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Scary Mommy Book Club

Stop Asking People Of Color To Explain Racism—Pick Up One Of These Books Instead

by Rachel Garlinghouse

January 31 2020

Updated August 2020





cary Mommy and Amazon

Last year, I abruptly de-friended a woman on Facebook. We'd known each other for over a decade, and attended the same church. Whenever I'd post an article, meme, or video about racism—which was quite often—she'd relentlessly message me. She wanted me to further explain—over and over.



She's white, and I'm white. Her two sons are also white, while my four kids are black. She worked in a local school district that had a significant population of black students. She usually started by telling me she was interested in learning and being better for some of the

kids she served, but every single time she ended up insisting that she was right. Her messages came across as entitled and whiny. Every time I'd coddle her with an explanation, **she'd clap back with her whiteness.**

Conversing with her was exhausting—and I finally just gave up. She wasn't interested in listening and learning. Instead, she was greedily trying to worm her way into being right, while chronically falling back on her white fragility. If I, as a white woman, was tired of her nonsense, I can only imagine how tired a person of color would be with her. Of course, she wasn't asking them, because for her it felt safer to ask a white person.

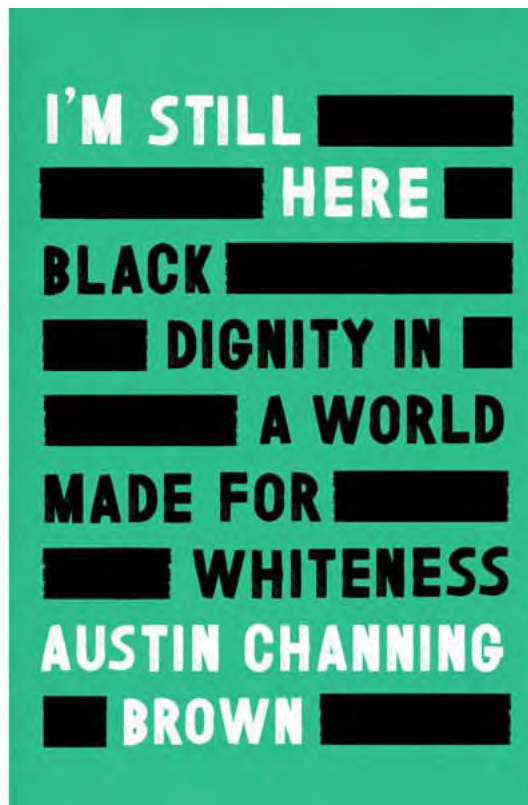
Some of my black friends have told me how utterly relentless and ridiculous white people are—and I can see why they feel that way. Whenever a curious white woman, once again, tries to stroke my daughters' cornrows or another white person fumbles over my kids' names or asks me if they like basketball and hip hop, I don't think it's possible to roll my eyes any harder.

When I call them on their racism, they practically come unglued. They swear they "didn't mean anything by it" and "don't have a racist bone" in their bodies. They might pipe up some ridiculous white shit about black-on-black crime, the fact that they once dated a black person, the race card, colorblindness, All Lives Matter, or reverse racism. I can predict in almost every situation what the person is going to say before they say it.

If I feel that these clapbacks get old, I can only imagine how sick and tired black and brown people are of hearing them. The responses are so terrible they appear rehearsed. Every time, I want to scream, *Just get educated and quit burdening people of color with the task of making you less ignorant.* These individuals who are burdened include my four children—who should just be allowed to be, you know, kids.

There are some incredible books available to teach us about race, race relations, history, and progress. For those who actually want to learn, to get woke, and to stay educated, these books are downright essential and helpful. **Many of us are parents, and if we're going to change the tide for future generations, we have to tackle race head-on** instead of evading it or pretending we are, as many white people have told me, all-one-race-the-human-race.

1. I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness



Amazon

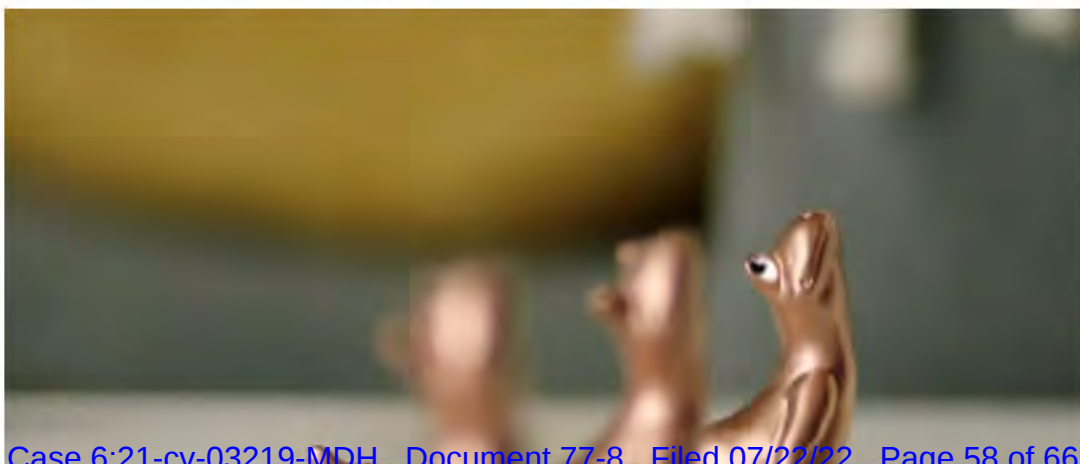
Austin Channing Brown starts her book by sharing that her first name was given to her to lead future employers to give her a callback. She covers compelling racial topics including white privilege, black leadership, and learning to love her blackness in a world made for whiteness.

2. *Antagonists, Advocates and Allies: The Wake Up Call Guide for White Women Who Want to Become Allies with Black Women*



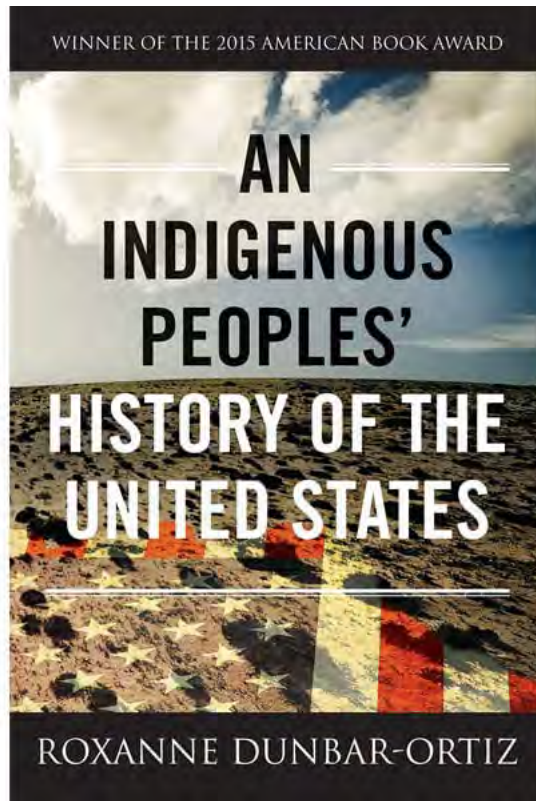
Author Catrice M. Jackson breaks down some of the ways white women have, intentionally or otherwise, contributed to black women's pain, and some ways they can begin to change this dynamic. Jackson argues that, to make the journey from antagonist to advocate to true ally, white women need to confront the uncomfortable realities of racial injustice.

AD





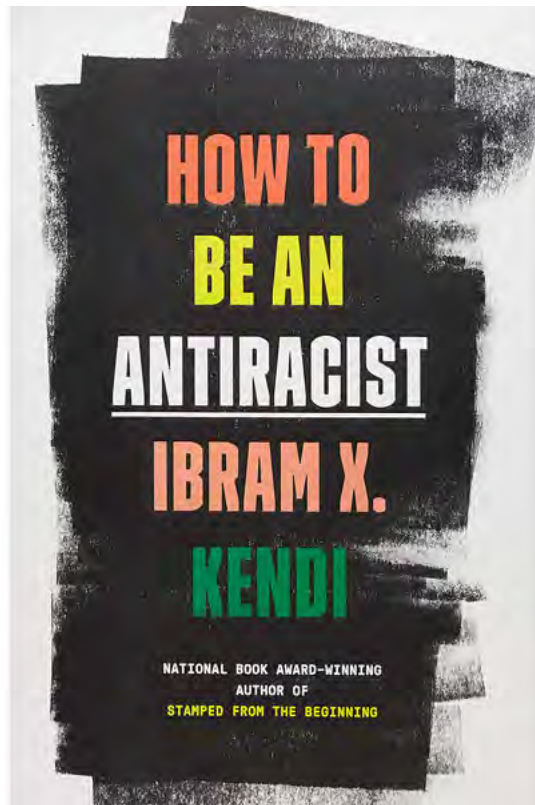
3. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*



Amazon

Rozanne Dunbar-Ortiz explores 400 years of American history, from the point of view of Indigenous people, like nothing we've read before. She explains the genocide—or as quoted, the “exterminating”—that was initiated and maintained by the government.

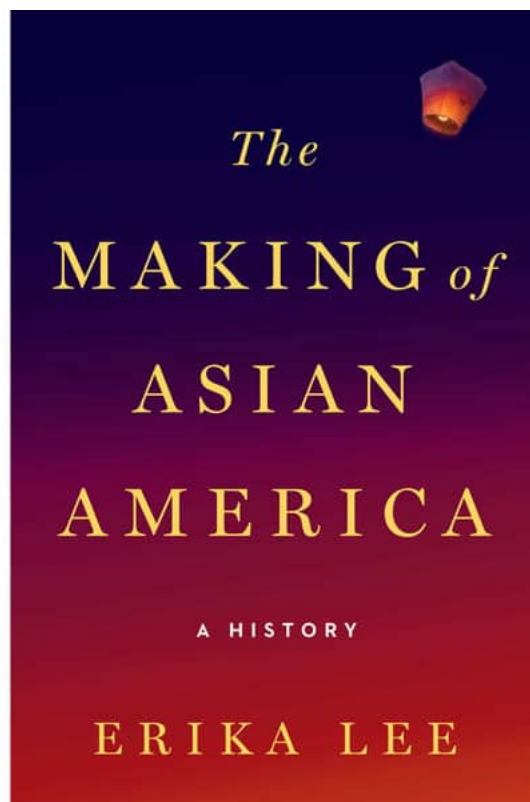
4. *How to be an Antiracist*



Amazon

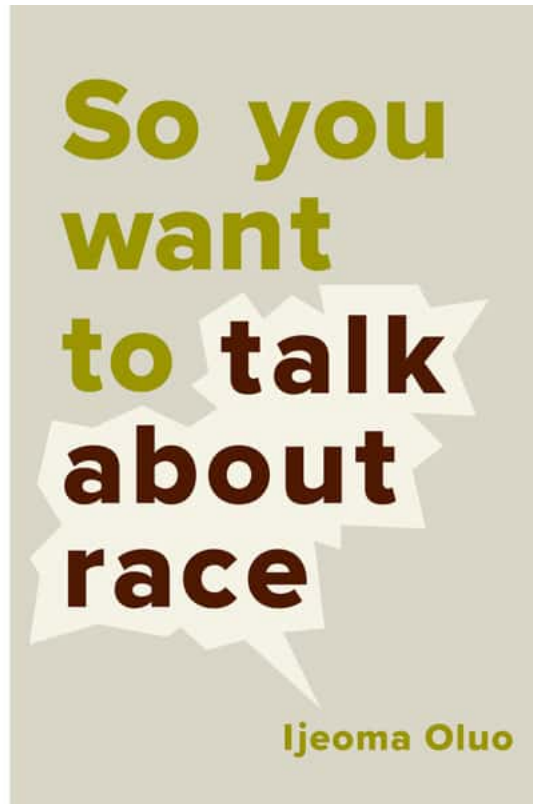
Ibram X. Kendi explains the concept of being anti-racist—which is distinctly different than claiming to be non-racist. His conversation isn't limited to race. Kendi also explores discrimination and mistreatment of people based on gender and body type. As the title suggests, he gives readers the “how” that they crave.

5. *The Making of Asian America: A History*



Author Erika Lee shares the important roles Asian-Americans have played in making the United States what it is today. She explores history—including World War II and Asian immigration—and the problematic stereotype that Asians are the “model minority.”

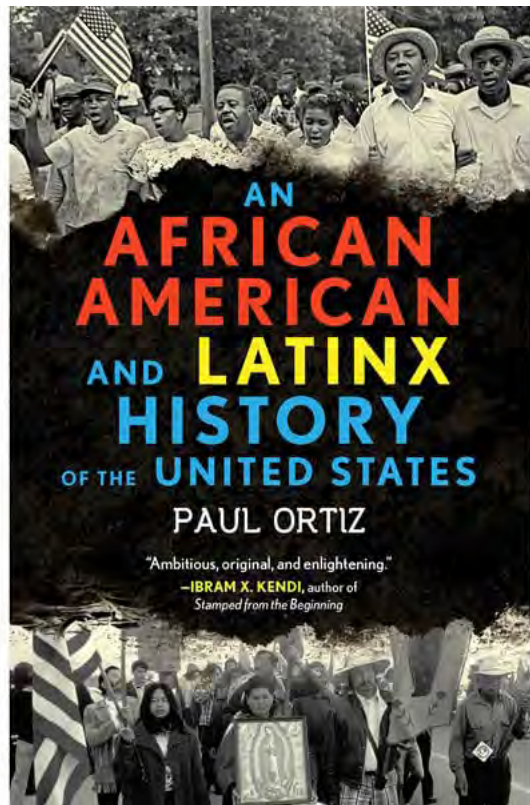
6. So You Want to Talk About Race



Amazon

Ijeoma Oluo lays out how racism infiltrates and impacts almost every space—and what we can do to combat it. She delves into topics such as affirmative action, mass incarceration, “casual” racist jokes, and police brutality, among many others. Her new book, *Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America*, comes out in May 2020.

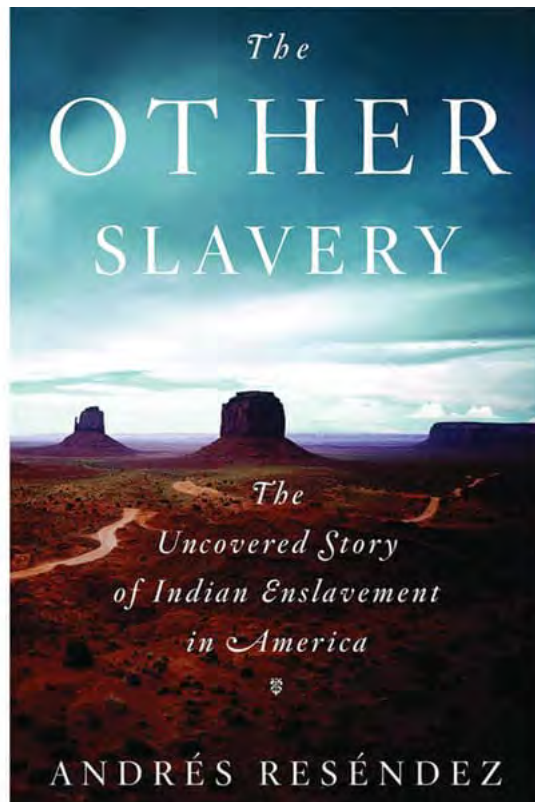
7. An African American and Latinx History of the United States



Amazon

Paul Ortiz explores two hundred years worth of African American and Latinx history demonstrating its influence on history and telling stories that many textbooks fail to teach. This cultural anthropology book is a dense read delving into narratives and documents that have often been overlooked by other scholars.

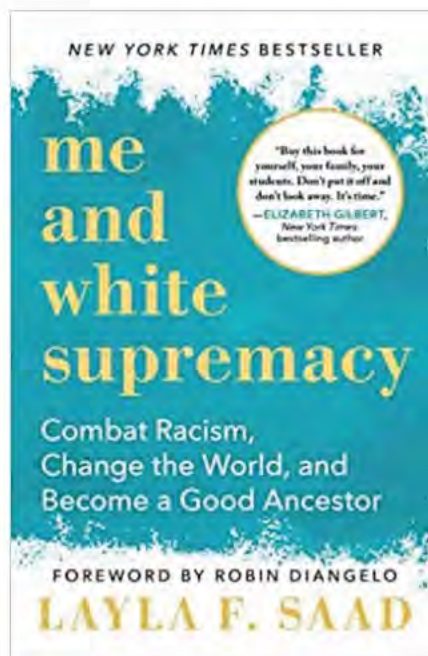
8 *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*



Amazon

Andrés Reséndez delves into the “other slavery” shame of the United States—when Native Americans were kidnapped by whites and forced to work in mines and as household servants. He argues that this important piece of American history has long been ignored or unheard of.

9. **Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor**



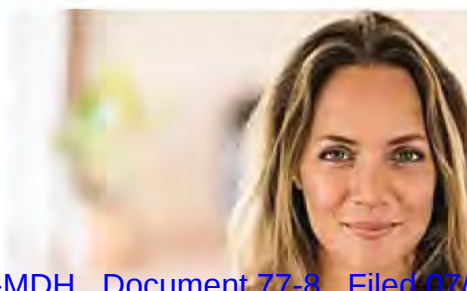
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Based on Layla Saad's #meandwhitesupremacy Instagram challenge, *Me and White Supremacy* takes you on a 28-day journey where you can explore your own unconscious biases when it comes to racism and racist behavior. A must read.

If you are opting to pick up one of these books (or even better, several of them) I applaud you. Also, consider requesting them (or donating a copy, if you're able) at your local library. Change doesn't happen without historical knowledge, acknowledgement of the problem, and — most importantly — subsequent action. As Maya Angelou famously shared, when we know better, we can do better.

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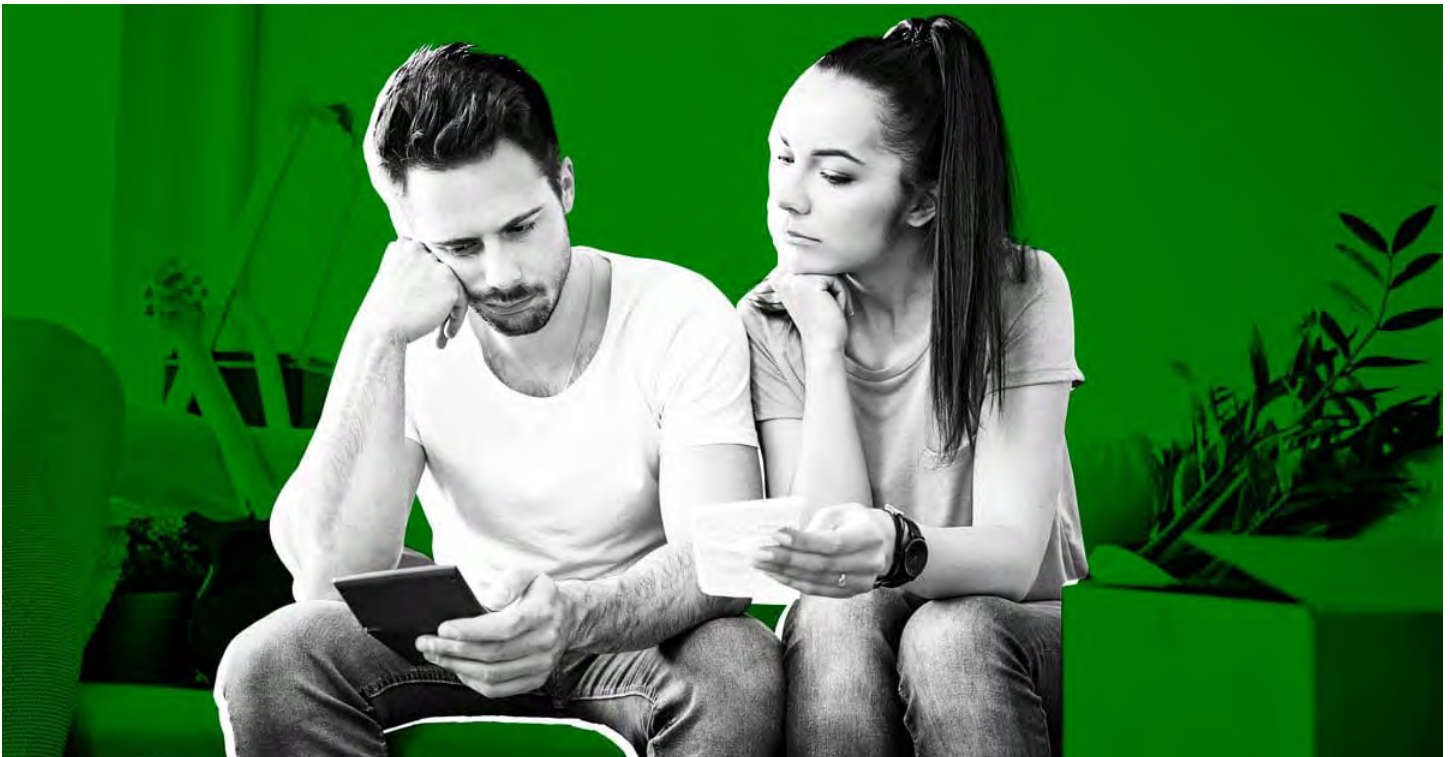
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Health & Wellness

Your Income Affects Your Health — And Your Family's Health Too

by Elizabeth Broadbent | January 31, 2020

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Scary Mommy and Westend61/Getty

In 2017, the average US life expectancy was around 80 years, according to [CNN](#). But that's for Americans *overall*. In 2016, CNN reported that researchers found that men in the top 1% in terms of income live an average of around 87 years — while those in the bottom 1% live 15 years less. The richest women live to be 89, the poorest about 79 years.

Your income affects *how long you'll live*. It directly affects your health. Researchers in 2016 claimed that it wasn't the money, saying life expectancy was affected by "education, health, and lifestyle behaviors." But who's more likely to be highly educated? Who's more likely to have the money to eat well? Who's less likely to smoke or be obese?

Folks with money, that's who. Data and studies confirm it. Income affects life expectancy, period.

Almost worse is the way income affects a person's quality of life. CNN says that after age 50, the richest men average another 31 healthy years of life. The poorest men, on the other hand? After age 50, they can only expect another 22 or 23 years. *That's an eight year difference*. Eight years in which someone could be dependent on medication, affected by mobility issues, ravaged by dementia, or in need of constant care. Eight years in which someone can expect to live an independent life. It's not affected by education or lifestyle. Income affects it. The richest women get another 33 healthy years. The poorest? 24 years. For women, the gap, then, is even larger.

If income affects one person's quality of life, it affects the whole family's.

How Income Affects Children's Health

As the CDC says, those at, near, or below the federal poverty level are about twice as likely to smoke than those earning double the federal poverty level in America. The first group is also likely to smoke for twice as long. And they not only have higher rates of lung cancer, but they generally also have less access to good health care — which means they're diagnosed at "later stages of diseases and conditions."

This means that those who make less money are more likely to be exposed to secondhand smoke, says the CDC — and therefore more likely to suffer its ill effects. A child's exposure to secondhand smoke, according to the CDC, can cause "more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)." They attribute 1,000 infant deaths a year to smoking during pregnancy. Smoking, heavily influenced by income, affects the health of children in the family — not to mention any partners who may be exposed to secondhand smoke.



Ziga Plahutar/Getty

According to Tolerance.org, 23.5 million Americans in low-income areas live in so-called "food deserts": places where access to fresh fruits and veggies, whole grains, and lean meat is difficult because grocery stores are too far away. Food deserts put people at a disadvantage when it comes to nutrition, which impacts health.

The CDC also reports that children who are living "at or below the federal poverty level" are more likely to experience lead poisoning than more affluent children. Lead exposure can damage the brain and the entire nervous system. It can slow a child's growth, cause "behavioral and learning problems," and affect a child's hearing and speech. It leads to lower IQ scores and "underperformance" in school. Income affects children's chances of not only being exposed to lead, but from suffering the negative consequences of it.

It Affects Caregivers As Well

Caregivers, or people who take care of a family member or relative with an illness or disability, include almost a third of all American adults, according to the [American Psychological Association](#). [Caregiver.org](#) states bluntly that, "The lower the income and education a person has, the more likely he or she is a caregiver."

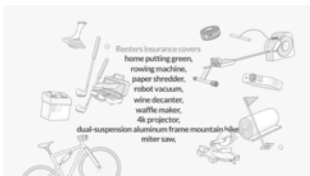
Income affects whether or not someone is a caregiver — and caregiving affects the caregiver's health. They may experience "caregiver stress," according to the [Office of Women's Health](#), which can cause depression and anxiety. They're more likely to have weakened immune systems and suffer from a higher rate of chronic diseases. In other words, caregiving is stressful, and stress causes negative health outcomes. The lower your income and education level, the more likely you are to be a caregiver. Income affects the health not only then of a person's life expectancy and the number of healthy years they're likely to have, but also the health of those who care for them.

Income affects health — one's own health and the health of the entire family. Those living in poverty or struggling financially suffer disproportionately from any number of negative health outcomes, children and adults alike. And without things like better access to health care, more flexible working hours, a higher minimum wage, and improvement in living conditions, poor Americans will continue to suffer disproportionately.

Unfortunately, as it stands, in America, when it comes to a family's health, income affects everything.

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